

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 1-3. These sheets, which include Figs. 1-3, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1-3.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action having a mailing date of October 13, 2006. Claims 3, 12-13, and 15 are rewritten in independent form. Claims 4, 6-10, 14, 16, and 19-20 are amended as shown. Claims 1-2, 11, and 24 are canceled herein without prejudice. New claims 27-29 are added. No new matter has been added. With this amendment, claims 3-10, 12-23, and 25-29 are pending in the application.

I. Preliminary matters

The present Office Action acknowledged the present application's claim to foreign priority, but indicated that the certified copy of the priority document has not yet been filed. The certified copy of the priority document is included herewith for filing, thereby perfecting the claim to foreign priority.

The present Office Action further objected to Figures 1-3. Replacement sheets of drawings, having amendments to Figures 1-3, are included herewith for filing, thereby overcoming the objection to the drawings.

II. Discussion of the claims

The present Office Action rejected claims 1, 6, 8-11, 14, 16, and 18-26 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Uehara (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,274) in view of the Figures 1-3 of the present application. It appears that claim 2 was also rejected based on the same grounds.

However, claims 3-5, 7, 12-13, 15, and 17 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten into independent form. The Examiner is thanked for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Accordingly, claims 3, 12-13, and 15 are rewritten in independent form, with their respective base claims 1-2 and 11 now canceled without prejudice. Dependent claims 6, 8, 14, 16, and 20 are amended to change their dependency based on the newly independent claims.

Independent claim 9 is amended to include the allowable recitations along the lines of those present in newly independent claim 3. Independent claim 22 is similarly amended,

with its dependent claim 24 now canceled without prejudice. Claims 9 and 22 are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 4, 6-7, and 9 are amended to clarify that certain recitations in these claims and in their related claims do not fall within the scope of 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph. Various other amendments are made to the claims as shown to provide proper antecedent basis, to make grammatical corrections, and/or to otherwise place such claims in better form.

New claims 27-29 contain recitations consistent with the allowable subject matter indicated in the present Office Action.

It is kindly requested that the claims be renumbered appropriately, so that the claims belonging to the same claim set are grouped together in the issued patent.

III. Conclusion

Overall, none of the references singly or in any motivated combination disclose, teach, or suggest what is recited in the independent claims. Thus, given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, the independent claims are now in condition for allowance. The dependent claims that depend directly or indirectly on these independent claims are likewise allowable based on at least the same reasons and based on the recitations contained in each dependent claim.

If the applicants' attorney (Dennis M. de Guzman) has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to the allowability of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Mr. de Guzman at (206) 622-4900.

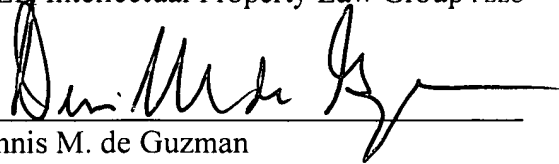
The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

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All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable.
Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis M. de Guzman", is written over a horizontal line.

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